



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
*Office of the Governor*

**James S. Gilmore, III**  
**Governor**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES PUBLIC AWARENESS  
CAMPAIGN TO CURB UNDERAGE TOBACCO PURCHASES**

RICHMOND – Governor Jim Gilmore today announced the beginning of the “No ID, No Tobacco, No Excuses” campaign to curb underage tobacco purchases across the Commonwealth.

“We have had great success in recent years encouraging young people in Virginia to avoid risky behaviors, such as tobacco use,” said Governor Gilmore. “This new campaign will make it clear to teenagers, parents, and retailers that tobacco sales to minors will not be tolerated in the Commonwealth.”

Starting Monday, radio spots, billboards, bus and train signs, and information to retailers will warn the public of the health risks tobacco poses to teenagers and the penalties for violating state laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors. The State Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services is sponsoring this effort. State law prohibits the sale of tobacco products to young people under age 18. Store owners and employees can be fined up to \$500 for making illegal sales of tobacco to teenagers.

Secretary of Health and Human Resources Lou Rossiter unveiled the campaign at a press conference this afternoon. “We know that if you can keep a young person from smoking until after age 21, chances are greater that they will never start,” said Secretary Rossiter. “There is a connection between risky behaviors. If we can help young people avoid tobacco products, we believe they will make healthier choices when confronted with other risky behaviors.”

Public service announcements and paid radio spots will draw parents into the anti-smoking campaign by alerting them to the dangers of teenage smoking and asking them to get involved by talking to their kids and to their neighborhood store owners. They will also be given a toll free number to call if they think the law is being broken.

With the new campaign, over 5400 retailer packets have gone out to store owners, urging them to train their employees to check identification, and not to accept stories or excuses that may lead to an illegal purchase.

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